ADARSH
CHITRA
KATHA

26

KANYAKUMARI

Kanyakumari is the presiding deity at the shore temple of Cape Comorin, the Southernmost tip of this country. The place is of great tourist attraction and a holy shrine for the devout. People throng here to witness the meeting of the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, as well as to pray at the temple of Kanyakumari. In fact Cape Comorin is named after its deity, and is called Kanyakumari or Kumari, for short.

In the Sthala Purana a very interesting tale is told about the maiden deity, Kanyakumari, of the shore temple. Mention is also made in the Shiva Purana, of the life of Kanyakumari and her love for Lord Shiva. According to legends, Kanyakumari was a manifestation of Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva.

Derived from various sources, the story in this book is an exciting tale of the ultimate conquest of good over evil, and makes interesting reading for children.

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THE TWELVE JYOTIRLINGAS

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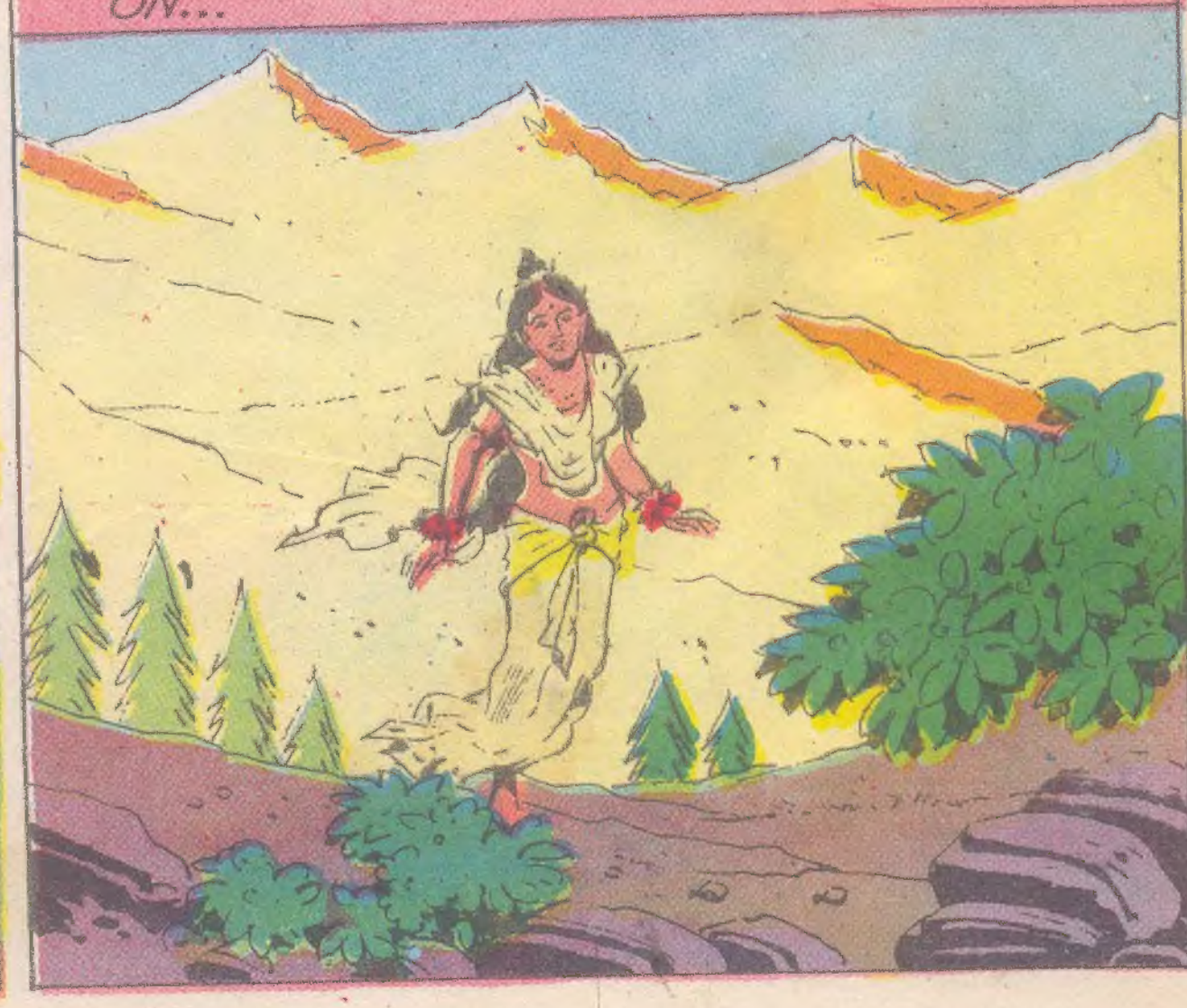
KANYAKUMARI

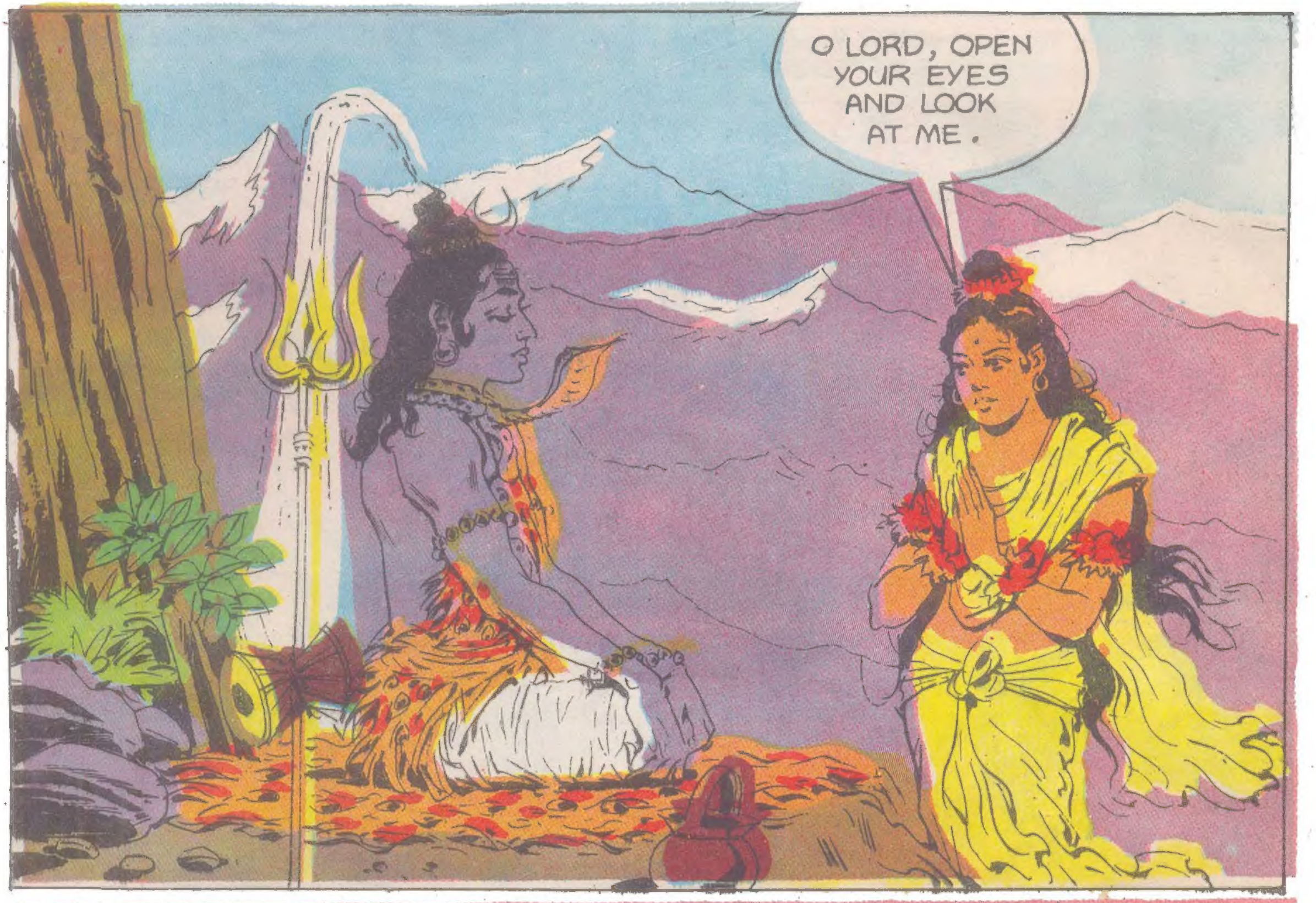
A BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN ONCE ROAMED THE HILLS AND DALES OF THE HIMALAYAS. THE SHIMMERING SNOW-CAPPED MOUNTAINS DELIGHTED HER AND THE DARKNESS DID NOT FRIGHTEN HER.

BUT SOMETIMES SHE BECAME THOUGHTFUL.

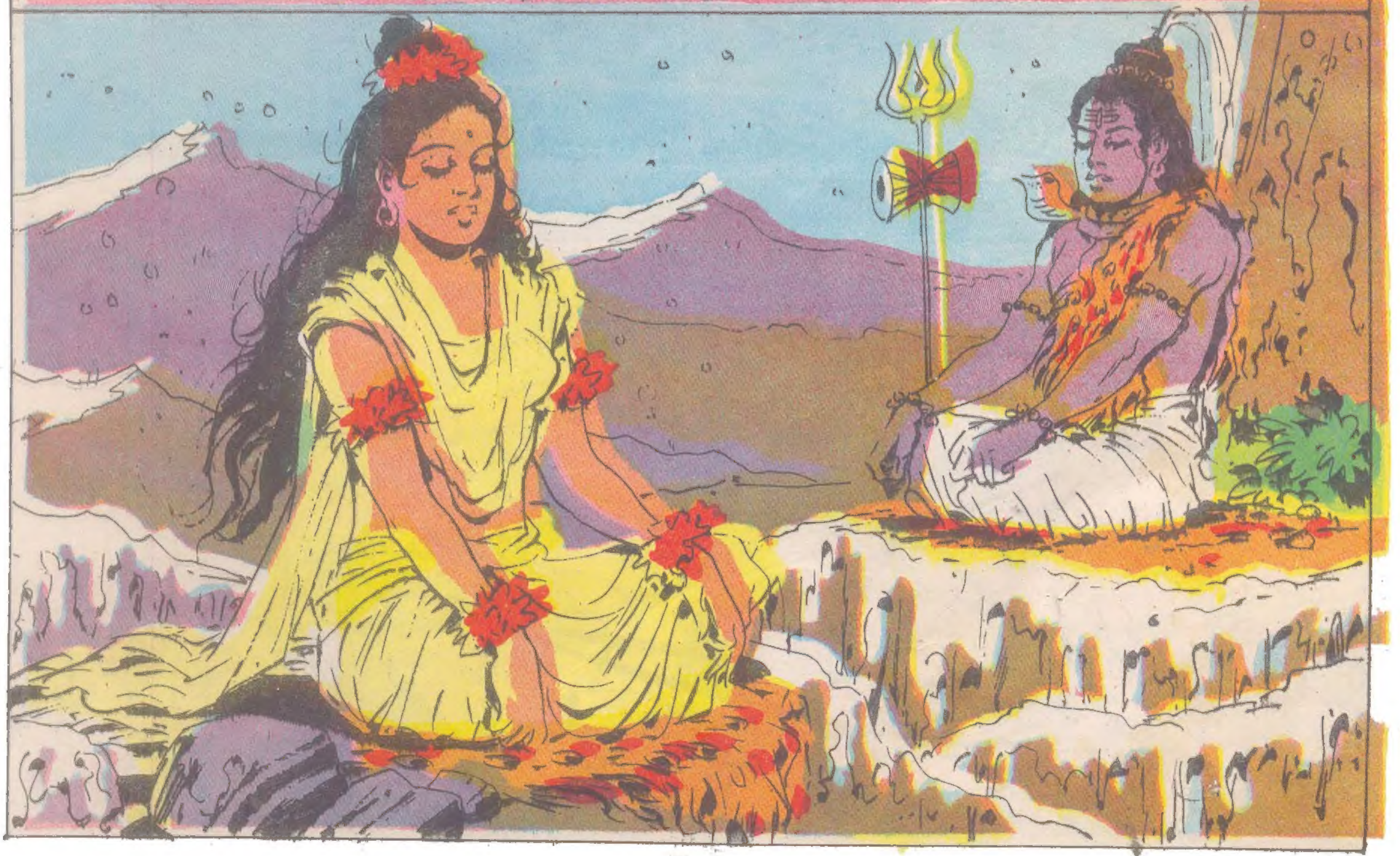
NEVERTHELESS SHE MOVED ON, AND ON...



...TILL SHE REACHED MOUNT KAILASHA WHERE LORD SHIVA SAT MEDITATING.
OH ! LORD SHIVA !
NOW MY MIND IS AT PEACE.



MANY YEARS PASSED. THE YOUNG MAIDEN MEDITATED BUT SHIVA DID NOT OPEN HIS EYES:



AT THE SAME TIME, IN PATALA LOKA,* THE DEMON KING VANASURA REIGNED SUPREME.

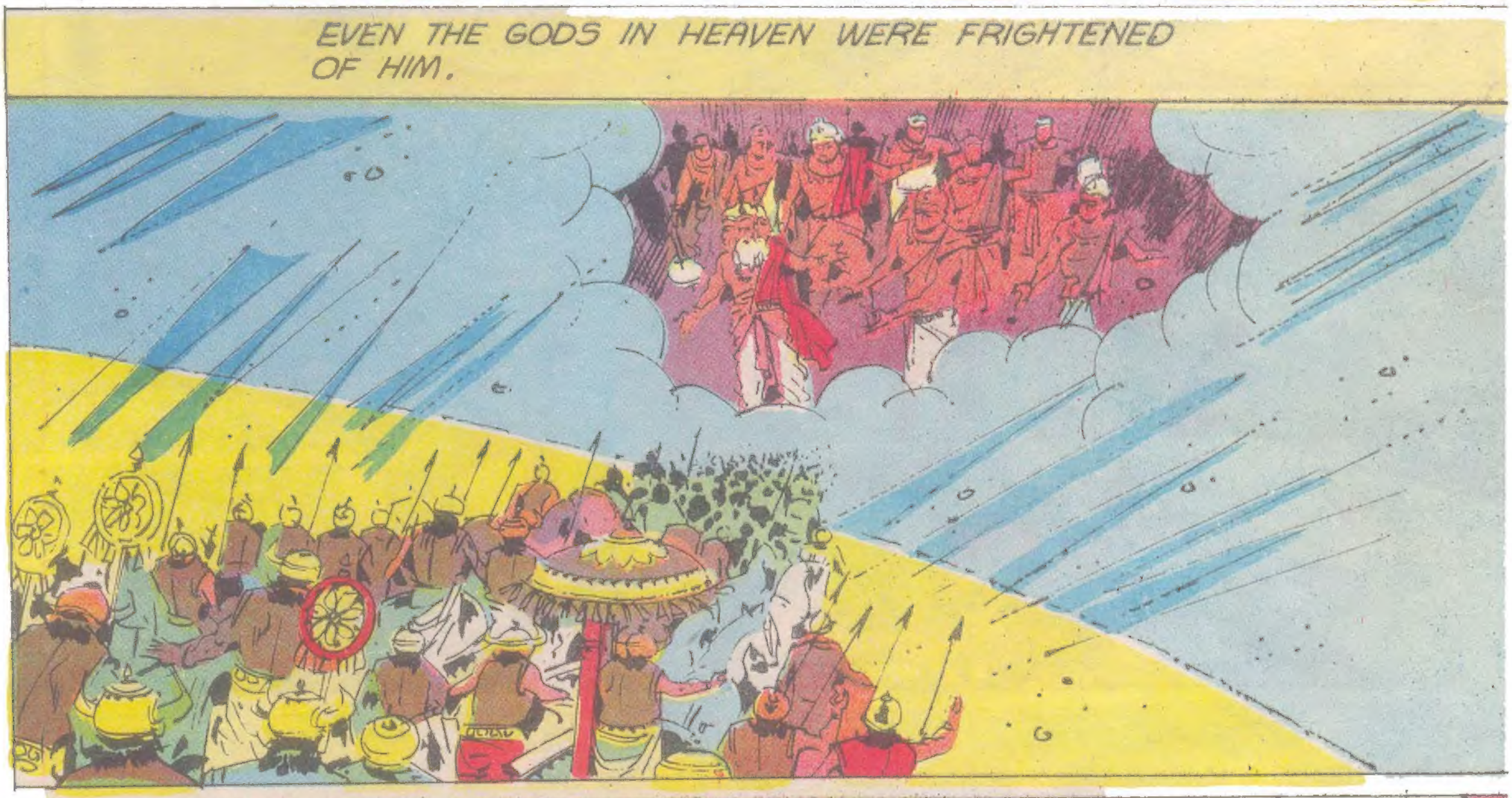
HE WAS VERY CRUEL, AND FEARED BY ALL.

GET OUT OF MY WAY.

HE CONQUERED THE WORLD OVER WHICH HE RULED.

*

HE VANQUISHED ALL THOSE WHO STOOD IN HIS WAY.


EVEN THE GODS IN HEAVEN WERE FRIGHTENED OF HIM.

VANASURA HAD TWO SPIES, MOORKHA AND THUNNUKHA.
COMMAND, YOUR MAJESTY...
... AND WE SHALL OBEY

VANASURA SENT THEM TO ALL THE PLACES FOR ESPIONAGE. HE THUS CAME TO KNOW WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN EVERY NOOK AND CORNER OF THE WORLD. ONE DAY

BACK AT VANASURA'S PALACE—

HE ORDERED HIS MEN TO GIVE THEM A GOOD THRASHING.

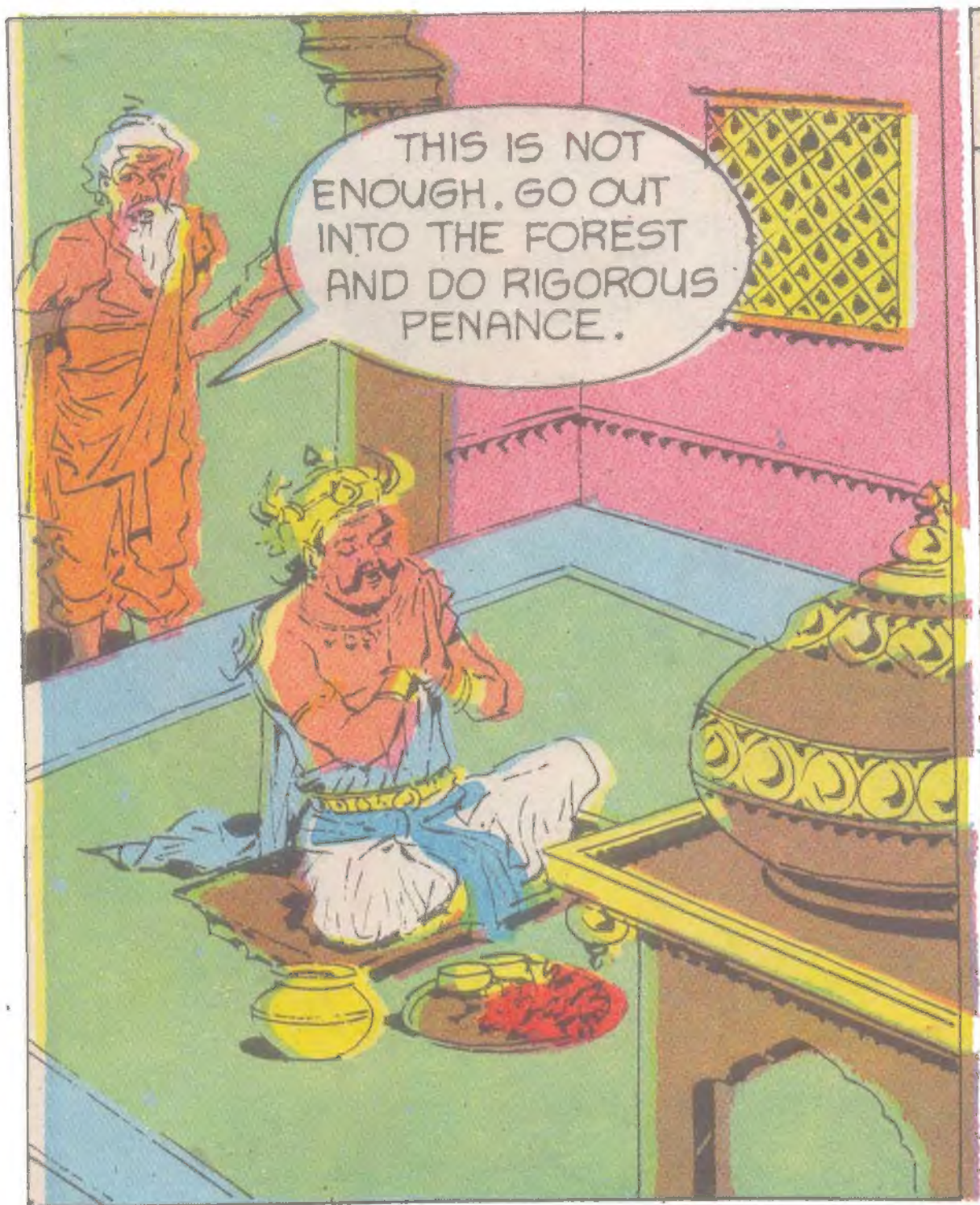
YET, VANASURA WAS NOT CONTENTED.

I WANT TO BECOME MORE POWERFUL.

HE CONSULTED HIS ACHARYA*

TELL ME GURUJI, WHAT SHOULD I DO TO ATTAIN MORE POWER.

MEDITATE ON LORD SHIVA. PRAY TO HIM.



VANASURA DID AS HE WAS TOLD. HE MEDITATED FOR MANY YEARS.

* PRECEPTOR

AT LAST SHIVA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.

VANASURA OPENED HIS EYES.
MY LORD.

I AM PLEASED WITH YOUR PENANCE. ASK FOR ANY BOON AND IT SHALL BE GRANTED.

LORD, ALMIGHTY, I WANT TO BE ALL POWERFUL. NO DEVA OR ASURA SHOULD EVER BE ABLE TO VANQUISH ME.
GRANTED. IS THAT ALL?

NOR SHOULD I DIE AT THE HANDS OF A MAN OR A WOMAN.
GRANTED.

AND THEN, SHIVA VANISHED. VANASURA, FULL OF HAPPINESS, CAME BACK TO HIS PALACE.

I AM THE MASTER OF ALL MASTERS.

IN KAILASHA, SHIVA OPENED HIS EYES IN ANSWER TO THE MAIDEN'S PRAYERS.

MY BLESSINGS TO YOU, MY DEAR CHILD.

THE DIVINE VOICE WOKE THE MAIDEN FROM HER MEDITATION.

MY GOD! . WHAT GRACE! WHAT MAJESTY.

TELL ME, MY DEAR CHILD, WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT?

I WISH TO BE WITH YOU ALWAYS.

MARRY ME, SO THAT I CAN BE AT YOUR FEET FOREVER.

THE TIME IS NOT YET RIPE.

THEN, HAVE ALL MY PRAYERS BECOME WORTHLESS? SHALL I NOT BE GRANTED MY WISH?

LATER. BUT FIRST YOU HAVE TO PERFORM A FORMIDABLE TASK FOR ME.

WHAT IS IT, MY LORD?

THAT YOU SHALL KNOW BY AND BY.

OH!

LORD SHIVA CONTINUES...

NOW LISTEN CAREFULLY. FIRSTLY, YOU SHALL REMAIN A KANYA* DURING YOU SOJOURN ON EARTH. SECONDLY, YOU SHALL GO TO KUMARI** AND MEDITATE THERE. HENCEFORTH, YOU SHALL BE KNOWN AS KANYAKUMARI.

AFTER BLESSING THE MAIDEN, SHIVA VANISHED.

KANYAKUMARI BEGAN HER JOURNEY DOWTHWARDS

*UNMARRIED GIRL ** CAPE COMMORIN, THE SOUTHERNMOST [illegible] OF THE COUNTRY

UNDER THE SCORCHING SUN...

...OR IN THE RAIN, SHE KEPT HER PACE AND RAN ON.

NEITHER THE THICK JUNGLES, NOR THE GREAT RIVERS OBSTRUCTED HER PATH. BUT SHE WONDERED—

WHY IS IT SO LONELY? THERE IS NOT A SOUL TO BE SEEN. WHERE IS EVERYBODY?

AT LAST, SHE REACHED THE VINDHYA HILLS, THE HOME OF THE GREAT SAGE, AGASTYA.

COME, MY DEAR CHILD. REST A WHILE BEFORE YOU PROCEED. YOU HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO.

YOU.. YOU SEEM TO KNOW WHO I AM AND WHERE I AM GOING.

YES. BY THE GRACE OF LORD SHIVA.
BLESS ME.

TELL ME O GREAT SAGE, WHY IS EVERYTHING SO QUIET ALL AROUND? WHERE IS EVERY-BODY?
THE DEMON VANASURA IS WIPING AWAY ALL TRACES OF LIFE FROM THIS LOVELY EARTH.

TELL ME MORE ABOUT HIM.

SAGE AGASTYA TOLD KANYA-KUMARI ALL ABOUT VANASURA AND THE BOON HE HAD OBTAINED FROM LORD SHIVA. FINALLY HE SAID—
BUT VANASURA FAILED TO SEEK EXEMPTION FROM DEATH AT THE HANDS OF A KANYA. SO, HIS END IS DRAWING NEAR.

DID NOT STOP TILL SHE REACHED KUMARI.

THE WAY OUT ..
WHAT AM I DOING HERE, STAR GAZING ? I MUST DO AS MY LORD HAS BID ME TO DO

ONE DAY, MOORKHA AND THUNNUKHA, WHILE ON THEIR ESPIONAGE ROUNDS, REACHED THE SHORES OF KUMARI.

EVERYTHING IS QUIET AND PEACEFUL THESE DAYS. NOTHING EXCITING SEEMS TO HAPPEN.

HM....M..

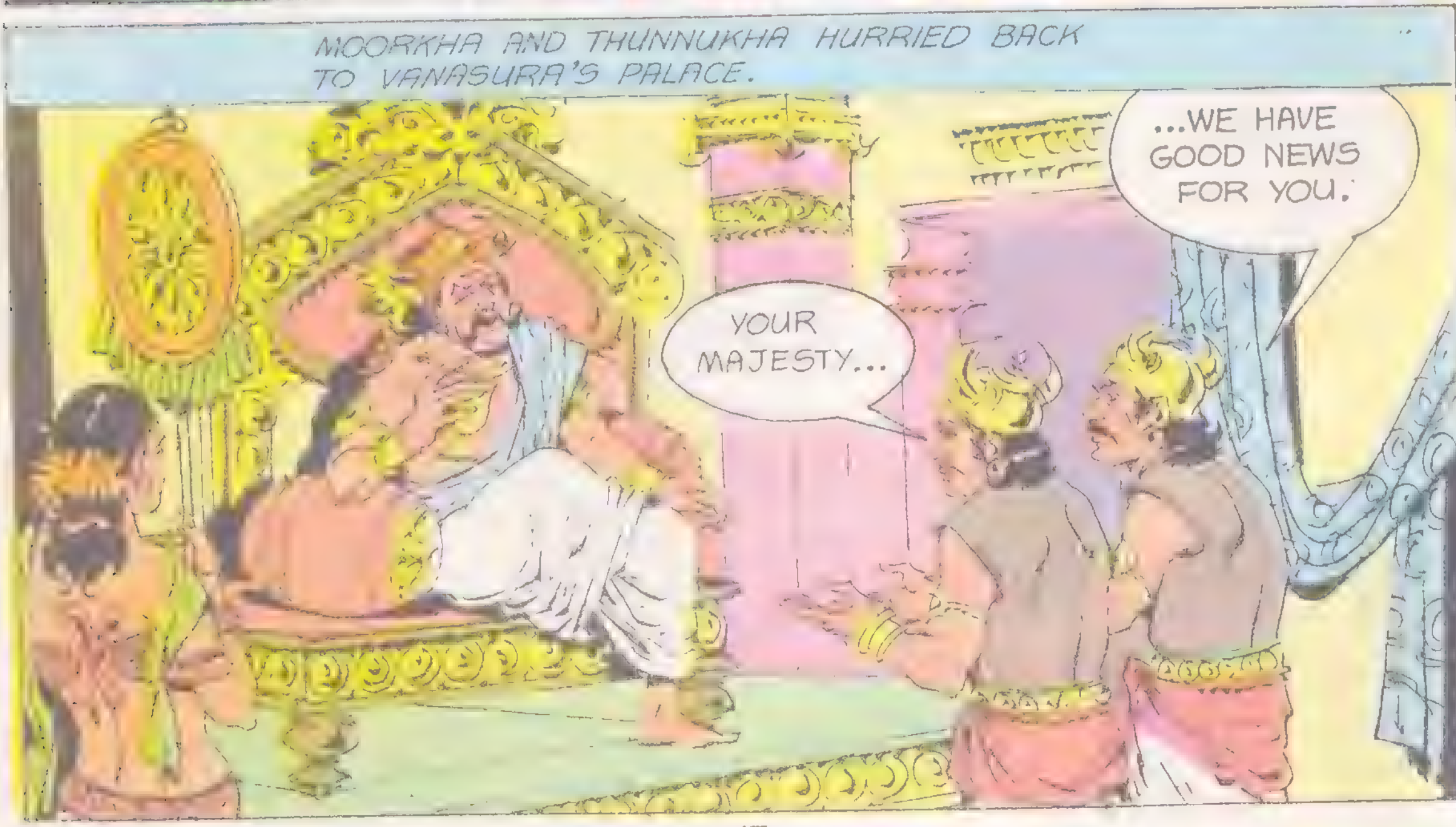
SOON, THEY SAW KANYAKUMARI.

LO.....OK. LOOK.

SHE... SHE... IS.. SO... SO BEAUTIFUL.

IS SHE A WITCH.. OR.. OR ?

MOORKHA AND THUNNUKHA HURRIED BACK TO VANASURA'S PALACE.



THEY TRIED TO DESCRIBE THE EXQUISITE BEAUTY OF KANYAKUMARI.

ON THE SHORES OF KUMARI...

O GREAT KING!

THERE IS... THERE IS...

COME ON, OUT WITH IT, BEFORE I THROW YOU OUT.

A...A... GIRL.

YOUR MAJESTY, SHE IS SUCH A RARE BEAUTY.

YOUR MAJESTY, SHE MUST, WITHOUT A DOUBT, ADORN THIS PALACE.

NO ONE BUT YOU IS WORTHY OF HER, O GREAT KING. YOU MUST MAKE HER YOUR QUEEN.

VANASURA HAD TWO WIVES. YET, HE WAS FILLED WITH A DESIRE TO MARRY KANYAKUMARI. HE MADE HIS WIVES DRESS HIM UP WELL.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING MY LORD?

TO MARRY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD.

WHEN VANASURA SAW KANYAKUMARI, HE WAS STUNNED BY HER BEAUTY.

I SHALL NOT GO BACK WITHOUT HER. I MUST HAVE HER.

HE SPOKE IN SUCH A LOUD VOICE THAT IT MADE THE WAVES RISE HIGHER.

O GREAT BEAUTY, OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK AT ME. I HAVE COME TO TAKE YOU AS MY WIFE. YOU SHALL LIVE HAPPILY IN MY PALACE.

BUT KANYAKUMARI WAS UNDISTURBED. AGAIN AND AGAIN VANASURA [illegible] PERSUADING KA[illegible] KUMARI TO ACCOMPANY HIM.

I AM THE KING OF KINGS, VANASURA. COME, YOU CAN LIVE IN LUXURY WITH ME.

SOON IT WAS DARK. VANASURA WAS DISAPPOINTED. HE TURNED TO GO BACK HOME.

IS THIS GIRL DEAD OR ALIVE? IS THIS BEAUTY TRUE OR FALSE?

BUT HE DID NOT GIVE UP HOPE.

ARE YOU GOING BACK, YOUR MAJESTY?

I SHALL COME BACK TOMORROW AND TAKE HER WITH ME.

AT THE PALACE—

WHERE IS YOUR NEW WIFE?

SHUT UP, YOU IMPERTINENT CREATURES.

VANASURA SPENT A RESTLESS NIGHT.

IN THE DEAD OF THE NIGHT, HE COLLECTED HIS WIVES' JEWELS.
THESE I SHALL GIVE TO MY BELOVED MINYAKUMARI.

AT DAYBREAK, HE SET OUT FOR THE SHORES OF KUMARI WITH THE GIFTS.

WHEN HE REACHED MINYAKUMARI'S PRESENCE, THE GIFTS WERE SPREAD OUT IN A MAGNIFICENT STYLE BEFORE HER.

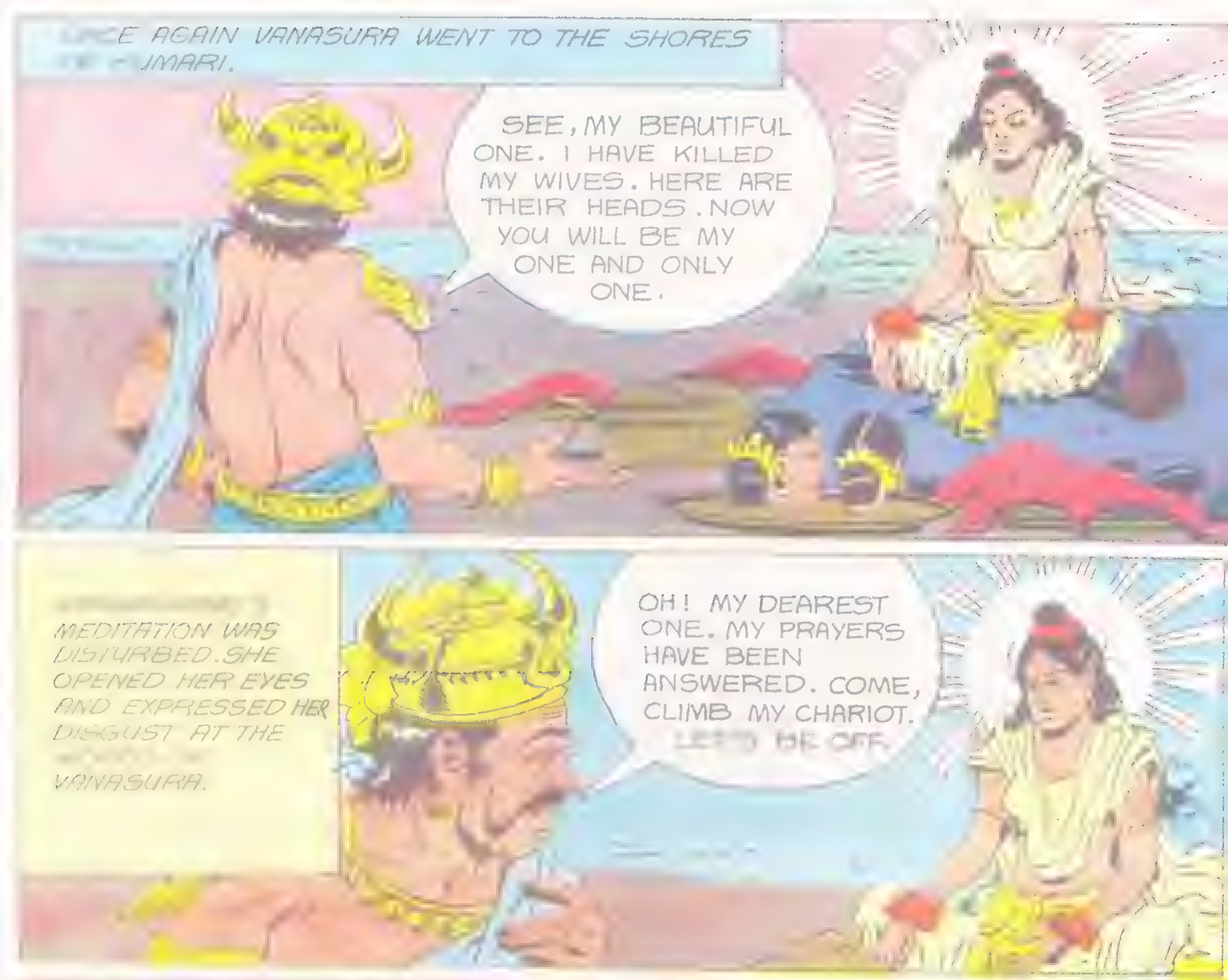
O LOVELY MAIDEN, SEE WHAT JEWELS I HAVE BROUGHT FOR YOU. THESE AND MUCH MORE YOU SHALL GET FROM ME IF YOU CONDESCEND TO MARRY ME.

MAY BE, SHE DOESN'T LIKE THE EXISTENCE OF MY OTHER TWO WIVES. I SHALL GET RID OF THEM. THEN KANYAKUMARI WILL COME WITH ME.

VANASURA WENT BACK TO HIS PALACE. HE SENT FOR MOOR-KHA AND THUMKHA.
GET ME THE HEADS OF MY WIVES ON A PLATTER.
YES, YOUR MAJESTY.
? ? ?

MOORKHA AND THUMKHA SOON CARRIED OUT THE KING'S ORDERS.

GOOD. TAKE THESE AND DISPLAY THEM BEFORE KANYA-KUMARI.
YES, YOUR MAJESTY.


ONCE AGAIN VANASURA WENT TO THE SHORES OF KUMARI.
SEE, MY BEAUTIFUL ONE. I HAVE KILLED MY WIVES. HERE ARE THEIR HEADS. NOW YOU WILL BE MY ONE AND ONLY ONE.
MEDITATION WAS DISTURBED. SHE OPENED HER EYES AND EXPRESSED HER DISGUST AT THE VANASURA.
OH! MY DEAREST ONE. MY PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. COME, CLIMB MY CHARIOT. LET'S BE OFF.

THE MOMENT SHE LOOKED AT THE GIFTS IN FRONT OF HER—
OH! THEY HAVE ALL VANISHED.

WHAT POWERS SHE POSSESSES!
WHAT EVIL SPIRIT IS SHE?

AT THE PALACE—

I FELT I WAS DEAD AND GONE FOR SOME TIME.

I TOO FELT THE SAME.

AT KIANDRI, FOR THE FIRST TIME, KANYAKUMARI SPOKE TO VANASURA—

IF YOU WANT ME, YOU MUST GET ME THE THINGS I ASK FOR.

OF COURSE, OF COURSE I SHALL. I HAVE THE POWER TO GET ANYTHING YOU WANT.

ARE YOU SURE?

YES. IF YOU HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE THINGS VANISH, I CAN MAKE THINGS APPEAR. WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM?

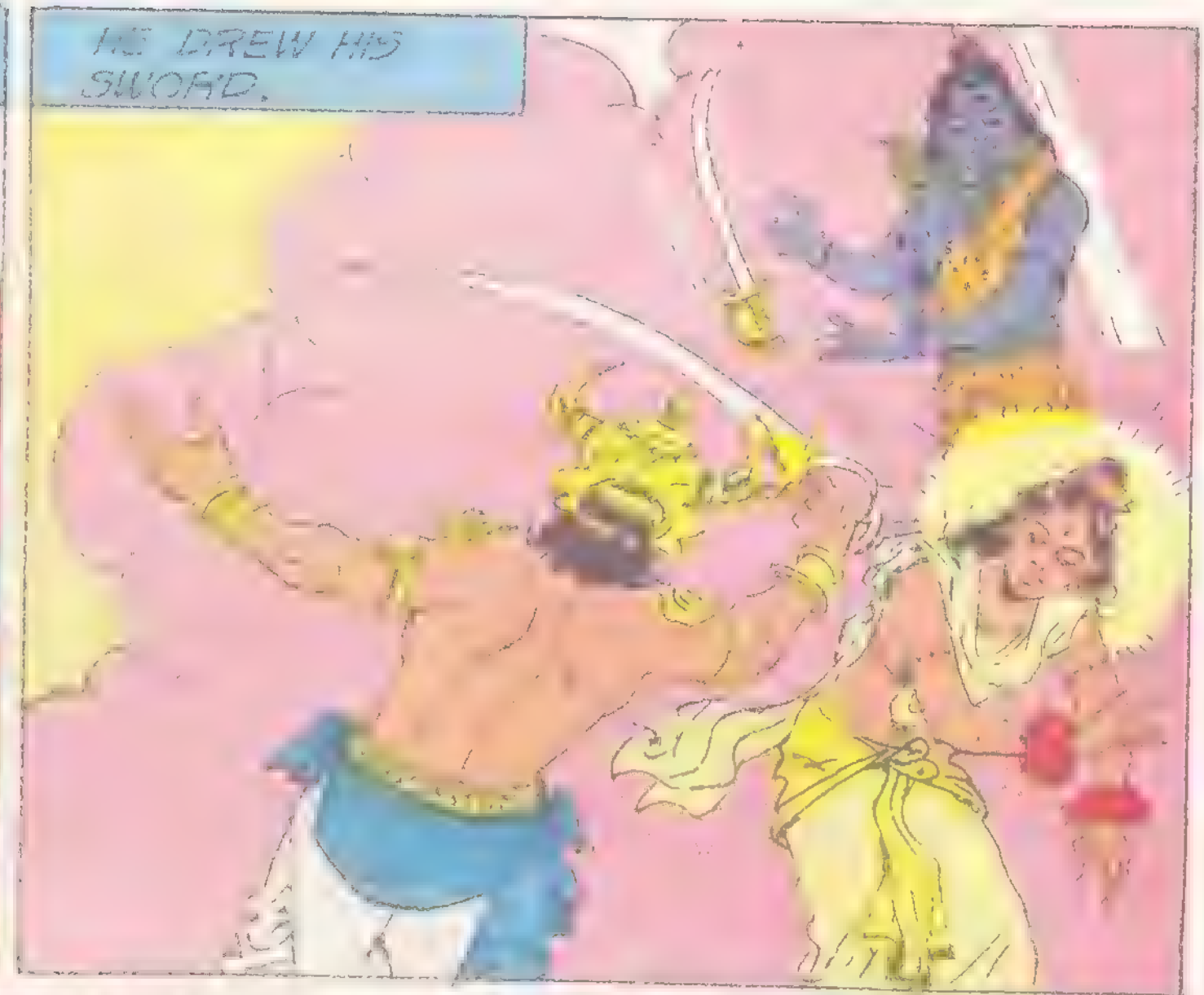
GET ME THE WATERS OF THE GANGA TO BATHE IN...

... AND THE SKIN OF THE SPOTTED DEER TO DRESS MYSELF IN...

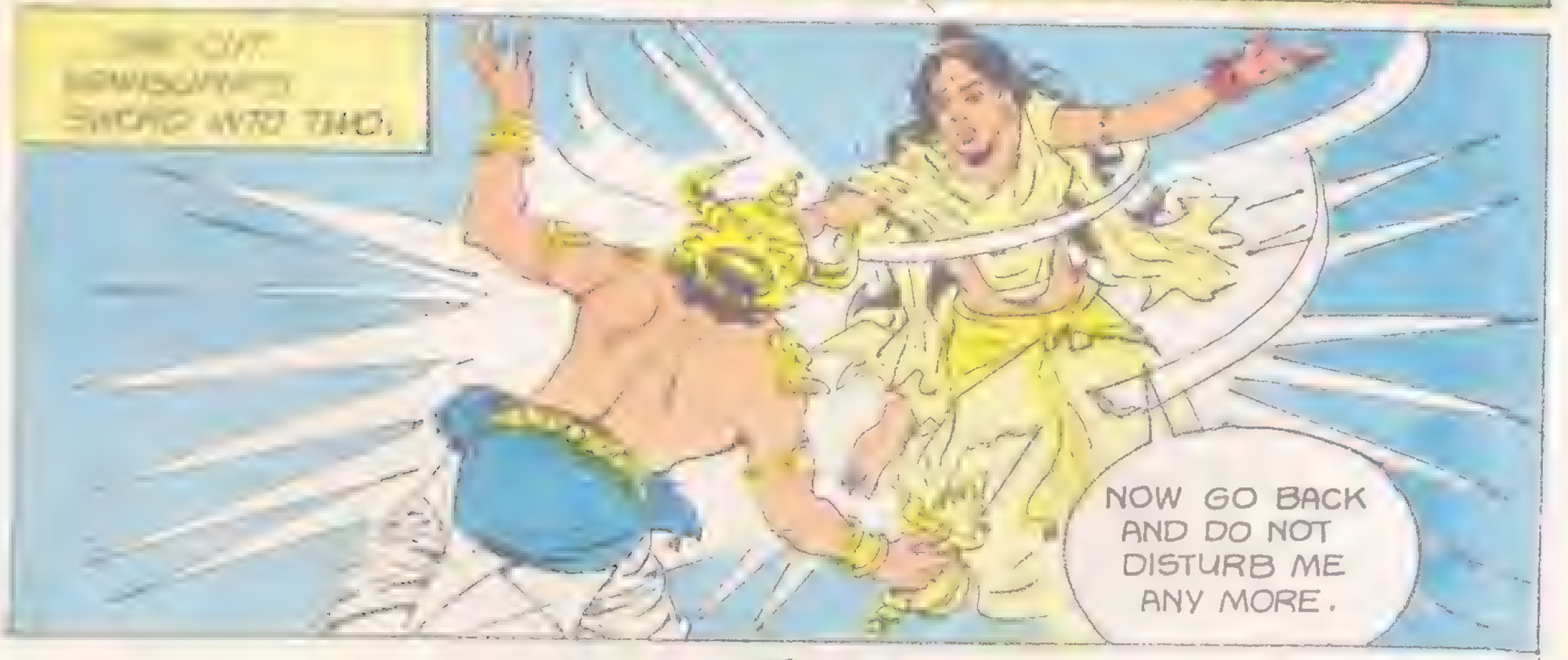
... AND THE FRAGRANT LILY TO ADORN MYSELF.

THE NEXT MOMENT, ALL THAT KANYAKUMARI HAD ASKED FOR APPEARED IN FRONT OF HER.

I MUST DEAL WITH THIS GIRL IN A DIFFERENT WAY.


HE DREW HIS SWORD.

BRILLIANT SWORD APPEARED IN KANYAKUMARI'S HAND WITH WHICH...


NOW GO BACK AND DO NOT DISTURB ME ANY MORE.

BUT VANASURA WOULD NOT ACCEPT DEFEAT.

I SHALL COME TOMORROW, BETTER-ARMED TO DEAL WITH YOU. WAIT AND SEE.

NEXT DAY, AT THE PALACE—

GET AN ARMY READY. LET EVERY ASURA BE ARMED TO THE TEETH. WE SHALL FIGHT KANYAKUMARI.

YOUR MAJESTY. LEAVE HER ALONE. SHE SEEMS TO HAVE DIVINE POWERS.

NONSENSE, I SHALL KILL HER FOR HER IMPERTINENCE. DO AS I TELL YOU.

SOON VANASURA'S ARMY GATHERED AND PROCEEDED TO THE SHORES OF KUMARI.

VANASURA AIMED AN ARROW AT KANYAKUMARI. IT FELL AS A ROSE AT HER FEET

KANYAKUMARI'S ARMY BEGAN TO GATHER...

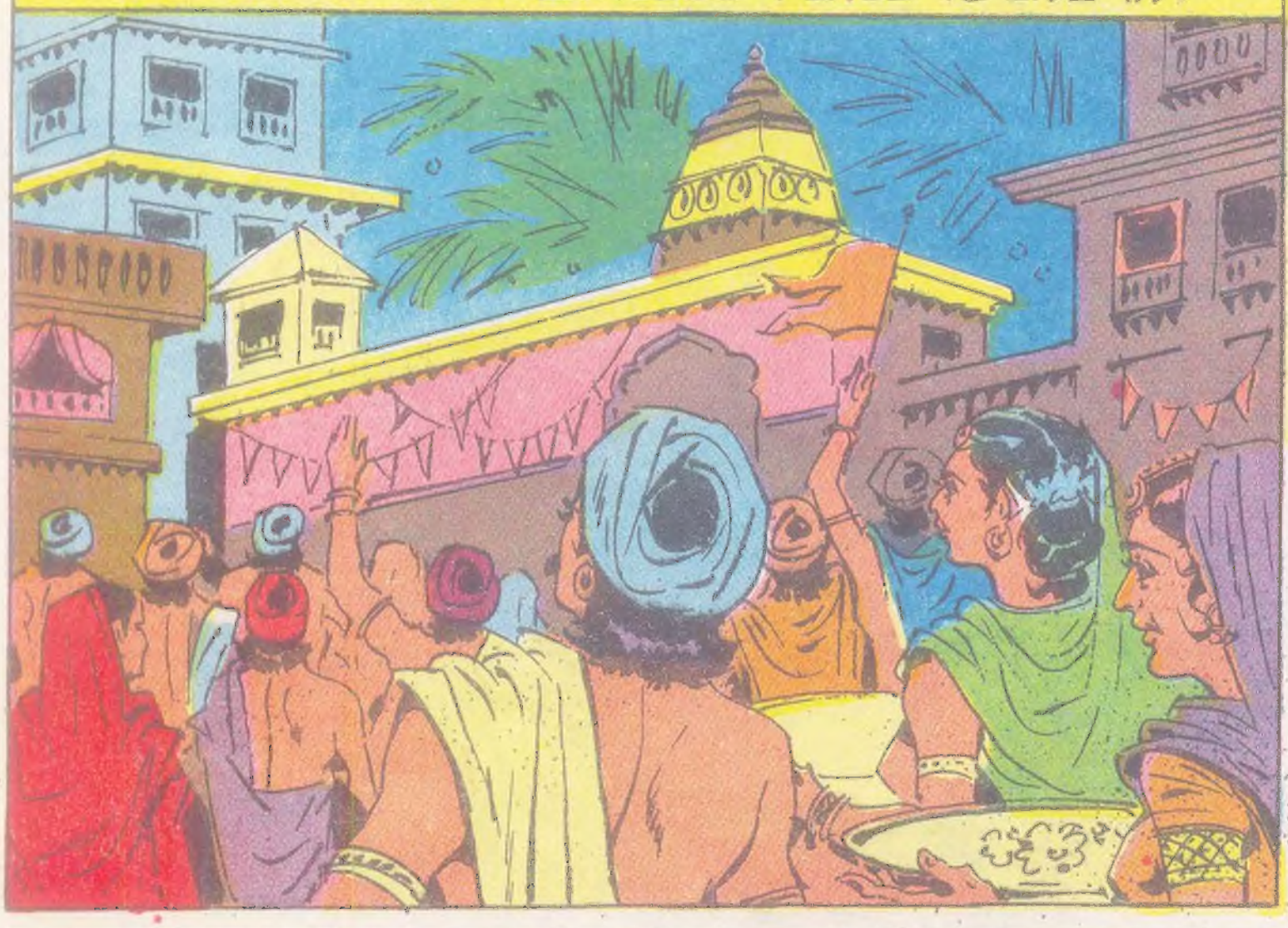
VANASURA STOOD ALONE IN FRONT OF KANYAKUMARI.

YOUR END IS NEAR, O GREAT AND CRUEL VANASURA. YOU ASKED FOR ALL THE BOONS, EXCEPT ESCAPE OF DEATH AT THE HANDS OF A KANYA. I SHALL NOW KILL YOU.

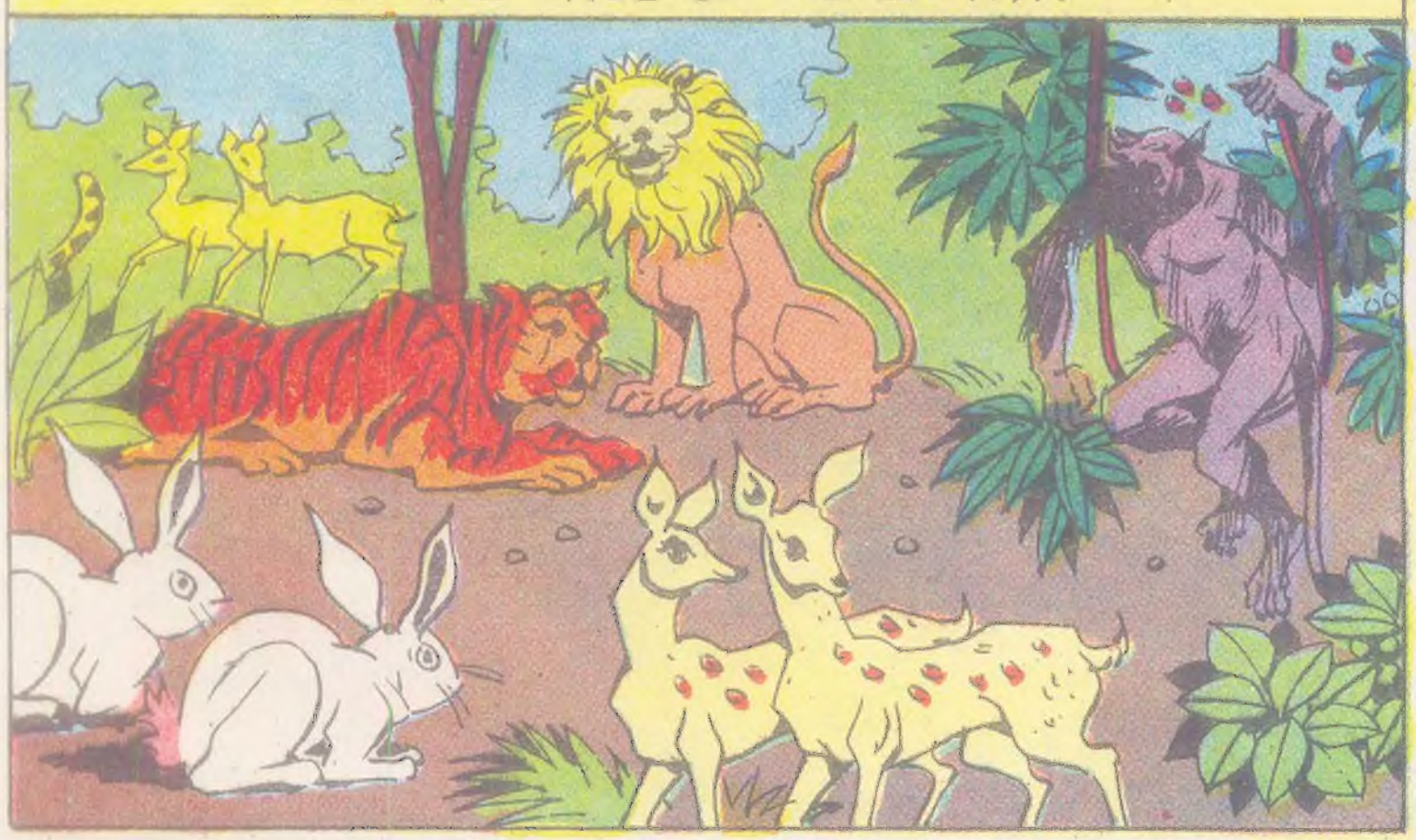
O, GOD!

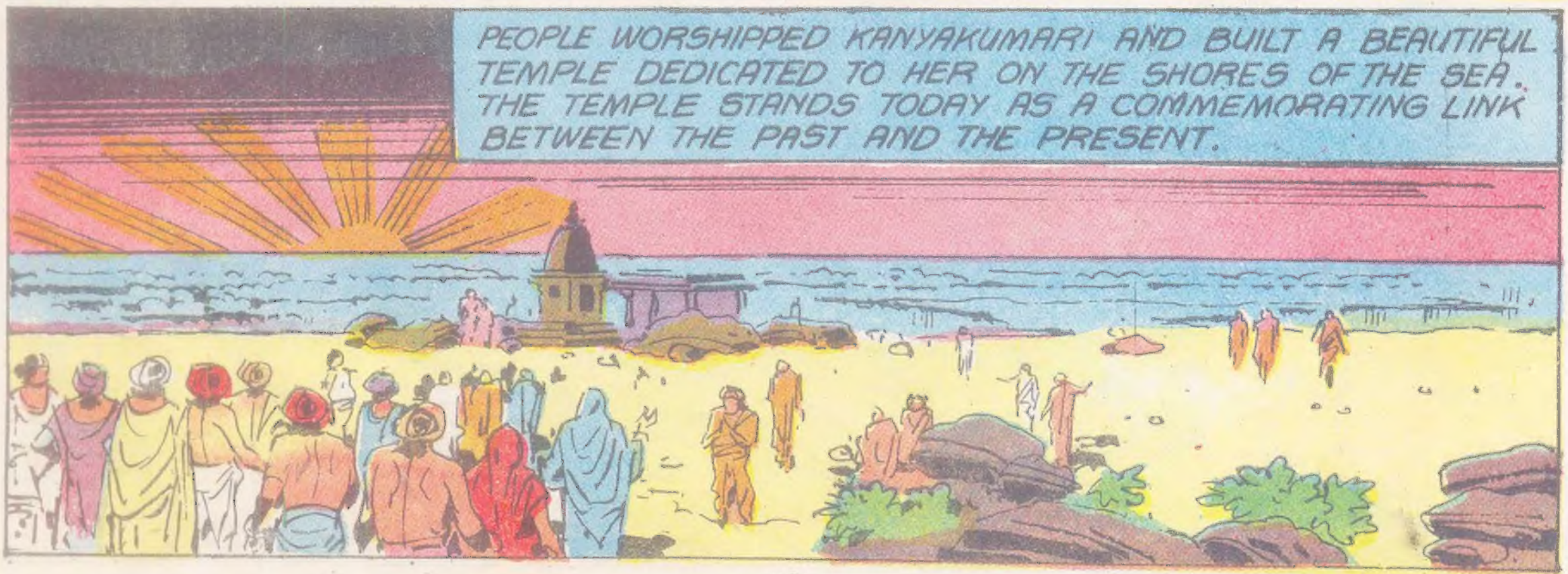
VANASURA'S HEAD ROLLED INTO THE SEA...

... AND A BIG WAVE ENGULFED IT. THUS ENDED THE LIFE OF ONE OF THE MOST WICKED DEMONS THAT EVER LIVED.


AFTER VANASURA'S DEATH THERE WAS REJOICING EVERYWHERE. THE WORLD ONCE AGAIN BECAME A PEACEFUL AND FEARLESS PLACE TO LIVE IN.

KANYAKUMARI WAS TAKEN BY LORD SHIVA, AND THENCEFORTH SHE LIVED WITH HIM FOREVER.


ANIMALS AND BIRDS APPEARED ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH.


PEOPLE WORSHIPPED KANYAKUMARI AND BUILT A BEAUTIFUL TEMPLE DEDICATED TO HER ON THE SHORES OF THE SEA. THE TEMPLE STANDS TODAY AS A COMMEMORATING LINK BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE PRESENT.

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